



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
District of Maryland*

*Thomas M. DiBiagio
United States Attorney*

*Vickie E. LeDuc
Public Information Officer*

*6625 United States Courthouse
101 West Lombard Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201-2692*

*410-209-4800
TTY/TDD: 410-962-4462
410-209-4885
FAX 410-962-3091
Vickie.LeDuc@usdoj.gov*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FOR FURTHER
INFORMATION CONTACT
Vickie E. LeDuc, AUSA
(410) 209-4885**

THREE MEN CHARGED IN MACHINE GUN CASE

Baltimore, Maryland -Thomas M. DiBiagio, United States Attorney for the District of Maryland, announced today that Billie Ray Womble, age 43, of the unit block Yawmeter Road, Baltimore County, Maryland, Carl Rich, age 55, of the 7000 block Windy Ridge, Baltimore County, Maryland and David Wayne Fitch, age 45, of the 3000 Block Putty Hill Ave., Baltimore County, Maryland were arraigned today on charges of conspiracy to possess and transfer unregistered machine guns, as well as possession and transfer of unregistered machine guns.

The 10 count indictment handed down by a federal grand jury on April 29, 2003 charges Womble, Rich and Fitch of conspiring to acquire and transfer AK-47 machine guns which were not registered to the defendants in the National Firearms Registration and Transfer Record. Womble, Rich and Fitch are also charged with 3 counts each of possessing and transferring AK-47 machine guns to each other and others known and unknown to the grand jury. According to the indictment, in March, 2003 Womble transferred nine AK-47's to Rich. Rich in turn transferred five of the AK-47's to Fitch, who in turn transferred or sold two of the machine guns.

The maximum penalty for the conspiracy count is 5 years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine.

The maximum penalty for each of the possession-transfer counts is 10 years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine.

An indictment is not a finding of guilt. An individual charged by indictment is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty at some later criminal proceedings.

The criminal charges in this indictment are the result of a joint investigation by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, the Baltimore County and Baltimore City Police Departments and the United States Attorney's Office. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Jane M. Erisman and Christopher J. Romano.